

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor's Drought Response Team Prepares for Continued Drought

TOPEKA -- Kansas Governor Sam Brownback and Senator Pat Roberts participated in a meeting of the Governor's Drought Response Team held Friday afternoon. This is the team's first meeting in 2013.

The team heard the U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook continues to illustrate drought conditions persisting or intensifying in Kansas, with a higher probability for above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation.

"As the drought persists, we have continued working closely with our partners to reduce the effects and prepare for prolonged drought situations. I recently asked cities and rural water districts to measure their water supply and evaluate their conservation plans to make sure they are adequate for the upcoming year," Governor Brownback said. "We appreciate those who have responded and we are finding many have adequate supply or are on top of their situation. I again encourage all public water suppliers to routinely monitor their supply to avoid emergency situations and my administration is committed to helping communities find solutions if problems arise."

Governor Brownback said it is imperative that not only public water suppliers, but all Kansans and communities evaluate how they can reduce their water usage to minimize the damage of the ongoing drought.

The meeting focused on responses from the public water supply assessment and also included updates regarding current reservoir levels and the status of the emergency drought livestock water supply initiative. There were also discussions regarding the federal government's role in drought management for Kansas.

"The Kansas Department of Agriculture Division of Conservation has been implementing an initiative to provide financial assistance to Kansas livestock producers needing water supplies," said Greg Foley, Division of Conservation executive director. "We have approved 579 applications to date and continue working with county conservation districts, NRCS and landowners to complete the remaining approved applications."

Adrian Polansky, state executive director for USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), reported that earlier this week Secretary Vilsack designated 88 Kansas counties as primary natural disaster areas and 17 additional counties named as contiguous disaster counties due to the drought.

"For clarification purposes, Doniphan Co., KS is contiguous to Andrew Co., MO which was named a primary county, the result being that all 105 Kansas counties have a primary or contiguous drought designation. This federal disaster declaration makes farmers and ranchers in all Kansas counties eligible for low-interest emergency loans through the FSA," Polansky said. "I encourage affected individuals to contact their local FSA offices for further information."

The Governor's Drought Response Team is chaired by Kansas Water Office (KWO) Director Tracy Streeter. For a complete list of the 12-member team, visit www.kwo.org. The team will continue to watch the situation closely and work to minimize the effects the drought has on Kansans.

For more detailed information about the state's current conditions, see the Kansas Climate Summary and Drought Report on the KWO website at www.kwo.org

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